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THE MARK ^{of the} BEAST

EAST OF SUEZ, SOME HOLD, THE DIRECT CONTROL OF PROVIDENCE CEASES, MAN BEING THERE HANDED OVER TO THE GODS AND DEVILS OF ASIA. MY FRIENDS FLEETE AND STRICKLAND CAN VOUCH FOR IT-- AND SO CAN THAT HIDEOUS LEPER, THE SERVANT OF HANUMAN, THE MONKEY-GOD, THE SILVER MAN WHO TRIED TO AVENGE "THE MARK OF THE BEAST..."



IT ALL BEGAN AT THE ANNUAL REUNION WE HELD AT THE CLUB WHEN FLEETE GOT INEXCUSABLY DRUNK...

I SAY, STRICKLAND, I THINK WE'D BETTER FORM A GUARD OF DISHONOR TO GET OLD FLEETE HOME. HE'S HAD ENOUGH.

AYE, LAD. HE'S BEEN AWAY TOO LONG. LIFE HERE IN RANGOON SEEMS TO BE TOO MUCH FOR HIM.

ALL RIGHT, OLD BOY. LET'S BE ON OUR WAY.

SURE--LE'SH GO.

EASY NOW.



OUR WAY HOME LAY THROUGH THE BAZAAR CLOSE TO THE TEMPLE OF HANUMAN, THE MONKEY-GOD. AS WE PASSED IT...

FLEETE! COME BACK!

MY OLD---HIC---FRIEND.



SHEE THAT? MARK OF THE B-BEASHT! I MADE IT. ISHN'T IT FINE?

STOP, FLEETE! YOU CAN'T DO THAT!



FLEETE SAT HIMSELF DOWN IN FRONT OF THE IDOL AND REFUSED TO MOVE. WE TRIED TO APOLOGIZE TO THE ANGRY PRIESTS....

WE'RE AWFULLY SORRY ABOUT THIS...IT COULDN'T BE HELPED.

AN ACCIDENT. PLEASE ACCEPT OUR HUMBLE APOLOGIES.



SUDDENLY, FROM BEHIND THE IDOL THERE STEPPED A HIDEOUS LEPER, CALLED BY THE NATIVES 'SILVER MAN' BECAUSE OF THE DEAD WHITENESS OF HIS FLESH...

GET UP, FLEETE! COME ON!

SILVER MAN! THE SILVER MAN!



BEFORE WE COULD STOP HIM THE AWFUL LEPER HAD THROWN HIS ARMS AROUND FLEETE AND PRESSED HIS HEAD AGAINST HIS BREAST...

LEAVE HIM ALONE!

KEEP AWAY FROM HIM.



LET'S GET HIM OUT OF HERE!

HOW? THE CROWD HAS US HEMMED IN.

SILENCE!







NASTY. WHAT IS IT?

I DON'T KNOW. IT WAS PINK THIS MORNING, BUT IT'S GOWN BLACK NOW.



AT THAT MOMENT THE CHOPS FLEETE HAD ORDERED WERE SERVED, AND HE WENT BACK TO EATING, SNAPPING AT THE FOOD, FOR ALL THE WORLD LIKE A BEAST...

YOU SEEM MIGHTY HUNGRY, FLEETE.

YEAH, YEAH...

SUDDENLY HE STOPPED AND LOOKED AROUND QUEERLY...

SAY, WHAT'S GOT INTO ME? I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER BEEN THIS HUNGRY IN MY LIFE: I'VE BOLTED MY DINNER LIKE AN OSTRICH.

FORGET IT. LET'S GO OUT AND TAKE A LOOK AT THE HORSES. I'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU THAT NEW PONY I BOUGHT.



AS WE ENTERED THE STABLE A STRANGE THING HAPPENED. THE HORSES REARED AND SCREAMED IN TERROR. THEY SEEMED TO HAVE GONE MAD...

WHAT'S GOT INTO THEM?

I DON'T KNOW. THEY'RE TERRIFIED OF SOMETHING.



WE'D BETTER GET OUT BEFORE THEY BREAK LOOSE. THEY CAN'T BE AFRAID OF US. I'D GIVE THREE MONTHS PAY IF ONE OF THEM COULD TALK.

AYE, SO WOULD I. VERY QUEER.



YOU KNOW I'M AWFULLY SLEEPY. I'M GOING TO LIE IN THE SUN FOR AWHILE. SEE YOU LATER.

RIGHT, FLEETE. I'LL STAY AROUND HERE AND SEE IF I CAN FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HORSES.



I'LL STAY WITH YOU, STRICKLAND.

WHEN FLEETE HAD LEFT...

SAY, DO YOU NOTICE ANYTHING QUEER ABOUT FLEETE?

WELL, HE EATS HIS FOOD LIKE A BEAST, BUT THAT MAY COME OF LIVING IN THE HILLS TOO LONG. MAYBE IT'S THAT BITE...



HMM! I CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT I THINK NOW, BUT YOU MUST STAY HERE FOR TONIGHT. WILL YOU?

IF YOU'RE THAT WORRIED, OF COURSE I WILL. BUT I THINK YOU'RE MAKING A FUSS OVER NOTHING.



ODDLY ENOUGH WHEN WE WENT INTO THE STABLE THE HORSES WERE QUIET. WE SADDLED A COUPLE AND RODE THROUGH THE BAZAAR. AS WE PASSED THE TEMPLE...

UNHH... AGGHHNNN...

LOOK, THERE'S THAT LEPER. HE GIVES ME THE CREEPS.

ME TOO. COME ON.



HE'S NOT ONE OF THE REGULAR PRIESTS OF THE TEMPLE I WISH I COULD PLACE HIM.

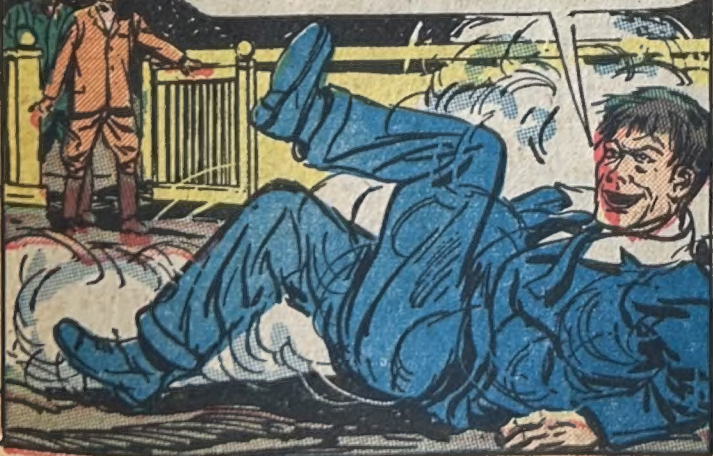
AYE, THERE'S SOMETHING EVIL ABOUT HIM.



IT WAS ALMOST DARK WHEN WE GOT HOME. AS WE APPROACHED THE HOUSE...

GOOD LORD! IT'S FLEETE! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

THE SMELL OF EARTH IS DELIGHTFUL. I THINK I'M GOING FOR A WALK--- A LONG WALK--- ALL NIGHT...



COME ON, FLEETE, GET UP. YOU'LL CATCH FEVER THERE. COME IN TO DINNER.

LET'S DINE OUT HERE-- MUCH NICER. NOT SO MUCH LIGHT. AND LET'S HAVE SOME MORE CHOPS-- LOTS OF THEM--- UNDER-DONE---BLOODY ONES WITH GRISTLE!



INSIDE, WITH THE LIGHTS ON, WE GOT AN AWFUL SHOCK WHEN WE GOT A GOOD LOOK AT FLEETE...

THOSE LIGHTS, THEY HURT MY EYES, I'M GOING TO MY ROOM.

ALL RIGHT, OLD MAN. TAKE IT EASY.



THERE'S GOING TO BE TROUBLE TONIGHT--- BIG TROUBLE. I'M WORRIED.

SO AM I!



IT WAS AN HOUR LATER THAT IT HAPPENED. FROM UPSTAIRS CAME THE LONG-DRAWN HOWL OF A WOLF...



WHAT WAS THAT?

IT CAME FROM FLEETE'S ROOM. COME ON!

WE CRASHED INTO THAT ROOM TO FIND A SIGHT OF HORROR THAT WILL REMAIN WITH ME ALWAYS. FLEETE HAD BECOME A *BESTIAL THING*...

FLEETE! COME BACK!

GET HIM!

UKK! UNGGG! UKK!



WE'LL HAVE TO TIE HIM UP. GET SOME ROPE, QUICK. I CAN'T HOLD HIM.

RIGHT!



SOMEHOW WE FINALLY SUBDUED HIM AND SENT FOR THE DOCTOR...

I'M AFRAID IT'S THE WORST CASE OF HYDROPHOBIA I'VE EVER SEEN. THERE ISN'T A THING I CAN DO.

ARE YOU SURE, DOCTOR?



YES. I WOULD STAKE MY REPUTATION ON IT. I'LL SEND A NURSE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.



THERE WAS THE LEPER DANCING WITH HIS SHADOW AND HOWLING TO THE MOON. AND EACH CRY WAS ANSWERED BY FLEETE...

WE WERE RIGHT! WE'VE GOT TO PUT A STOP TO THIS. WE MUST CATCH HIM.



WHEN THE DOCTOR HAD GONE...

THERE'S NOTHING A DOCTOR CAN DO. WE BOTH KNOW THAT!

AYE, BUT IF THE *SILVER MAN* HAS LAID A SPELL ON... LOOK!



EEEEOWAAA!



A MOMENT LATER I KNEW WHAT HE MEANT...

SOMEHOW WE FASHIONED A NOOSE AND DRAGGED THE *MONSTROSITY* INTO THE ROOM WHERE FLEETE LAY...

WHAT NOW?

KEEP HIM HERE UNTIL I'M READY FOR HIM.



LET HIM WATCH. LET HIM SEE HOW THEY GROW RED HOT---HOW THEY GLOW!

YOU-YOU'RE NOT...



NOW WE'LL SEE HOW GOOD OUR SPELLS ARE!

UHNNHH!



WHAT HAPPENED THEN IS NOT TO BE PRINTED, IT IS ENOUGH TO SAY THAT AT DAWN THE LEPER DID AS WE WISHED....

WE'VE WON!
WE'VE WON!

MAY IT PLEASE
GOD YOU ARE RIGHT.



HE'S DOING THE SAME THING!

SHHH!

UNHHH....
UNHHH....



OHHHH....

QUICK, HELP ME
UNTIE HIM.

ARE YOU
SURE?



THEN BEFORE OUR EYES THE FACE OF THE BEAST
FADED...

HE'S BECOMING
HUMAN AGAIN!

HIS EYES ARE THE
EYES OF A MAN! HIS
FACE CLEARS!



AND THEN HE SAT UP...

HELLO, YOU TWO. WHAT HAPPENED? I'M NEVER
GOING TO MIX MY DRINKS AGAIN. I'M
NEARLY DEAD.

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW NEARLY.
YOU'D BETTER LIE DOWN AND
GET SOME SLEEP.

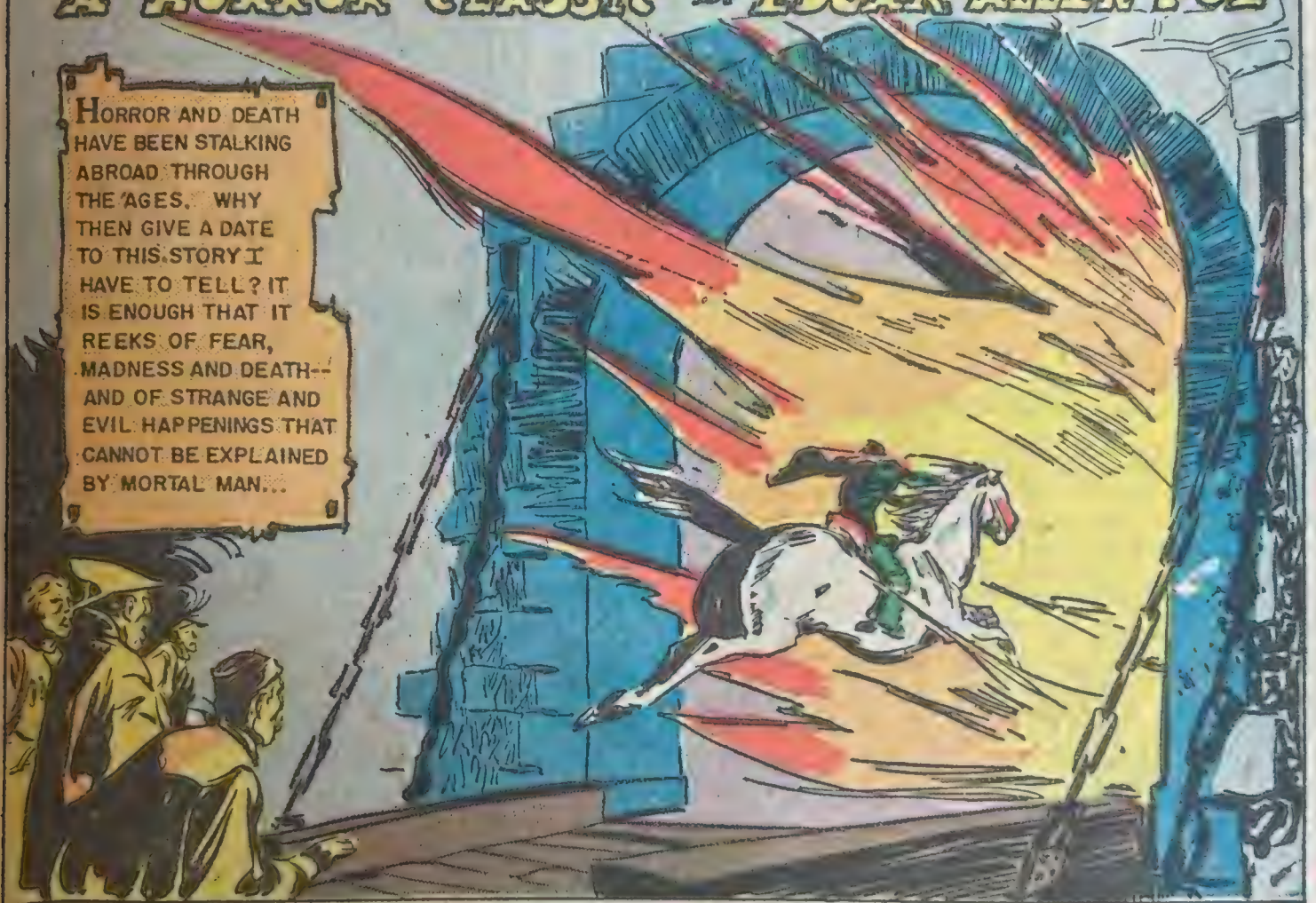


- THE END -

THE **CURSE** OF METZENGERSTEIN

A HORROR CLASSIC BY **EDGAR ALLEN POE**

HORROR AND DEATH HAVE BEEN STALKING ABROAD THROUGH THE AGES. WHY THEN GIVE A DATE TO THIS STORY I HAVE TO TELL? IT IS ENOUGH THAT IT REEKS OF FEAR, MADNESS AND DEATH-- AND OF STRANGE AND EVIL HAPPENINGS THAT CANNOT BE EXPLAINED BY MORTAL MAN...



MANY HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO IN THE WILD MOUNTAINS OF CARPATHIA DURING A HUNT...

NOW, BERLIFTZING, YOU DIE!

DO YOU WISH MY HORSE SO BADLY THAT YOU WOULD KILL ME FOR IT, METZENGERSTEIN?



PERHAPS! AND PERHAPS I HATE YOU TOO MUCH TO LET YOU LIVE.

THEN REMEMBER THIS! YOU SHALL HAVE THE HORSE... BUT WITH IT GOES MY EVERLASTING CURSE... IT SHALL BE A STALLION THAT WILL BRING DOOM TO THE HOUSE OF METZENGERSTEIN!





YOUR CURSES DO NOT FRIGHTEN ME! DIE!

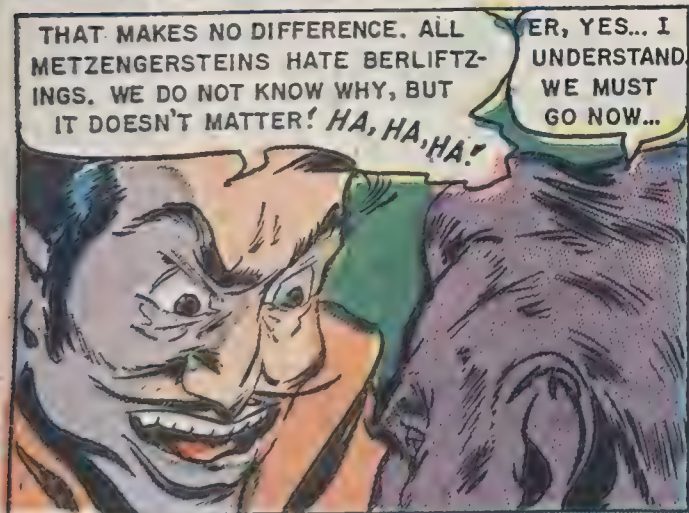
UHH!

SOME HUNDREDS OF YEARS LATER AS THE NEW BARON FREDERIK OF METZINGERSTEIN SHOWS SOME FRIENDS HIS CASTLE...



AND THIS TAPESTRY SHOWS AN ANCESTOR OF MINE KILLING A BERLIFTZING...OUR HATED ENEMIES.

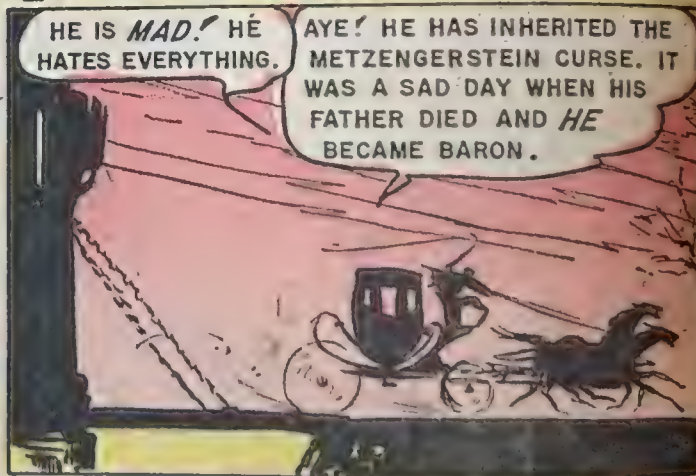
BUT THEY ARE YOUR NEIGHBORS!



THAT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE. ALL METZINGERSTEINS HATE BERLIFTZINGS. WE DO NOT KNOW WHY, BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER! HA, HA, HA!

ER, YES... I UNDERSTAND WE MUST GO NOW...

LATER, AS THE TWO LEAVE THE GLOOMY CASTLE...



HE IS *MAD*! HE HATES EVERYTHING.

AYE! HE HAS INHERITED THE METZINGERSTEIN CURSE. IT WAS A SAD DAY WHEN HIS FATHER DIED AND *HE* BECAME BARON.

AS TIME WENT ON, FREDERIK'S MADNESS AND HATE GREW! ONE NIGHT...



SOON, COUNT BERLIFTZING, YOU WILL HAVE *NO* HORSES. YOUR STABLES WILL BE GONE!



HA, HA, HA! NO BERLIFTZING LIVES WHO CAN CONQUER A METZINGERSTEIN!

HURRYING BACK TO HIS CASTLE, FREDERIK WATCHES THE FLAMES...

IF THEY BUT KNEW WHOSE HAND HAD PUT THE TORCH TO THEIR STABLES. IF THEY BUT KNEW...



SUDDENLY, *SOMETHING* COMPELS FREDERIK TO TURN AND LOOK AT THE TAPESTRY...

THE HEAD! IT MOVED!
IT TURNED TOWARD ME!
AHH, THOSE TEETH! THE EYES! EEEAAH!



MY-MY SHADOW! IT LOOKS AS IF I WERE KILLING THE MAN IN THE TAPESTRY! AND THE HORSE... IT'S TRYING TO GET AT ME!



SICK WITH TERROR FREDERIK RUNS FROM THE SCENE OF HORROR. AS HE REACHES THE CASTLE ENTRANCE...

IT IS AN OMEN! AN OMEN! YET I HAVE KILLED NO ONE...

WHAT IS IT? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

COUNT BERLITZING... IS DEAD!



DEAD, YOU SAY? INDEED! SHOCKING-- SHOCKING.

HA HA HA HA HA!



AT THAT MOMENT...

IT— IT'S THE SAME—
WHOSE HORSE IS THIS?

HE IS YOURS, SIR! AT
LEAST HE IS CLAIMED BY
NO OTHER OWNER...

MINE?

WE CAUGHT
HIM FLEEING, ALL
SMOKING AND FLAM-
ING, FROM THE BURN-
ING STABLES. WE LED
HIM BACK, BUT THE
GROOM DISCLAIMS
ANY TITLE TO HIM.

THEN FREDERIK RECEIVES EVEN MORE
STARTLING NEWS...

THE LETTERS 'W.V.B.' ARE
BRANDED ON HIM. IT COULD
STAND FOR WILLIAM VON
BERLIFTZING, BUT THEY
SAY NO.

THEN LET HIM BE MINE.
PERHAPS I MAY TAME
EVEN THAT DEVIL FROM
THE STABLES OF BER-
LIFTZING.

SIR, SOMEONE HAS CUT OUT PART OF THE
TAPESTRY IN THE TOWER CHAMBER... THE ONE
WITH THE HUGE HORSE!

TH--THE ONE
WITH THE
HORSE?

IT IS TRUE,
SIR!

LOCK THE CHAMBER IMMEDIATELY,
AND BRING THE KEY TO ME...!
HURRY!

FROM THAT DAY FORTH, FREDERIK WAS A CHANGED MAN.
MADNESS SEEMED TO HOLD HIM IN ITS GRIP...

WHAT IS THIS? I DIDN'T
ORDER WINE!

BUT YOU DID, SIR. I...
YIIII!

OUTSIDE THE BARON'S ROOM...

HE--HE BEAT ME AGAIN. HE EITHER SITS IN THAT LOCKED ROOM OR RIDES THAT WILD HORSE THEY BROUGHT HIM.

AYE, HIS ATTACHMENT FOR THAT BEAST IS UNATURAL. I FEAR HE HAS GONE MAD.



AND IT WAS TRUE. IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, OR THE HEAT OF SUN, HE COULD BE SEEN ASTRIDE THE MONSTROUS ANIMAL...



IT IS THE BARON! HE HAS INHERITED THE STREAK OF MADNESS THAT INFESTS ALL METZINGERSTEINS. MAY GOD HELP HIM!



AND SO MATTERS WENT, UNTIL ONE STORMY NIGHT, WHEN FREDERIK WAS SEIZED WITH THE INSANE DESIRE TO RIDE HIS WILD STEED...



HURRY! HURRY!

HE IS VERY RESTLESS TONIGHT, SIR. PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU DIDN'T TAKE HIM OUT!



NONSENSE! THERE IS NO HORSE IN THIS WORLD THAT I CAN'T CONTROL!

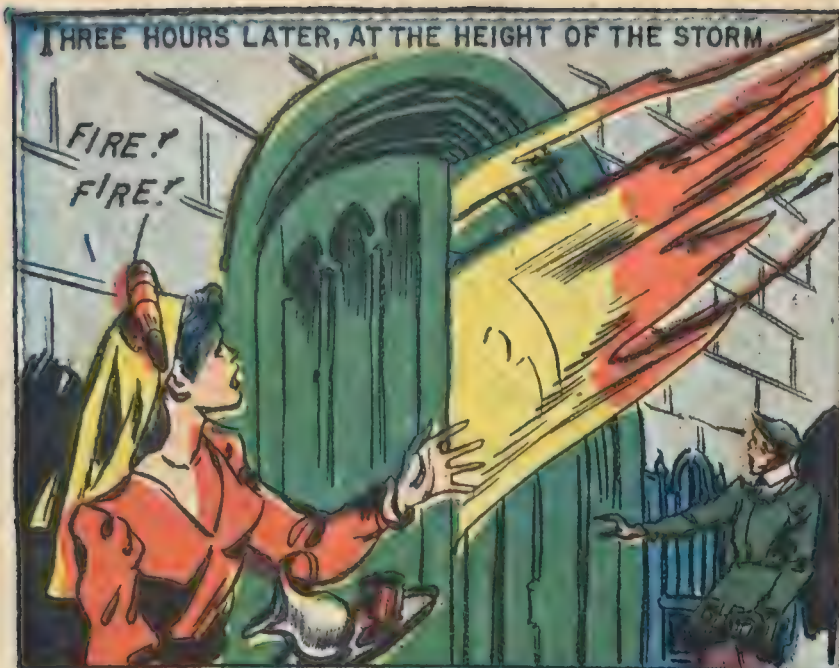


OUT OF MY WAY!

THE LOOK IN THAT BEAST'S EYE GIVES ME THE SHUDDERS.

AYE, I WOULDN'T RIDE HIM FOR ALL THE GOLD IN CARPATHIA!





IN WHAT SEEMED AN INSTANT THE STUPENDOUS AND MAGNIFICENT BATTLEMENT OF THE CASTLE METZENGERSTEIN WERE A MASS OF FLAMES...



THE TERRIFIED FREDERIK TRYs TO STOP THE HEAD-
LONG FLIGHT OF THE ACCURSED STALLION, BUT TO
NO AVAIL ...



THEN WITH A LAST GIGANTIC BURST OF ENERGY,
THE MONSTROUS HORSE CLATTERS UP THE TOTTER-
ING STAIRCASE OF THE CASTLE TO DISAPPEAR IN
THE AWFUL FLAMES...



AT THAT MOMENT THE FURY OF THE TEMPEST DIED AWAY AND IN THE SUPERNATURAL GLARE OF
WHITE HOT FLAMES, THERE COULD BE SEEN OVER THE DYING BATTLEMENTS A DISTANT COLOSSAL
FIGURE. THE CURSE OF METZINGERSTEIN HAD BEEN FULFILLED...

THE END...

WITCHCRAFT

THE extraordinary madness that seized the people of Salem back in 1692 is almost beyond belief today. Yet history shows that every popular delusion can affect the ignorant and unenlightened. What begins as a joke or trick of meanness can sweep into an epidemic worse than a contagious disease.

What happened in those black days is truly frightening. Even though the mischief done by the accused witches were trifles, it never occurred to those who denounced or sentenced them that their evil deeds were extraordinarily weak compared to the powers they were supposed to have. Apparently, it was not strange to them that those who might have lived in regal luxury should always be so wretchedly poor.

Aches and pains, disease of cattle and blights of crops, were charged to these witches. Children complained of being pricked with thorns and pins. (The pins are still to be seen in Salem today.) If a hysterical girl spoke the name of any feeble old woman, while in flighty talk, the woman was almost certain to be sentenced to death. The word of a small child was enough to hang, burn, or drown a supposed witch.

So wild did this hysterical fear become that a man of eighty, entirely blameless, was crushed to death beneath huge rocks when he refused to plead guilty to witchcraft. A child of five and a dog were also hanged after formal condemnation by a court. It is said that to this day the shadow of the old man haunts the scene of his execution warning the people of coming calamities.

The accuser one day was often the victim the next day. Gallows Hill, outside Salem was the place that the horrible tragedies took place almost daily.

According to the belief of the time, a witch or a wizard made a pact with Satan for the gift of supernatural power. In return he was to give up his soul to the devil after his life was over.

The pact between the witch and the devil was signed in the blood of the one who sold his soul, and horrible rites and ceremonies made the contract binding.

Satan then gave the new addition to his ranks of evil, a "familiar" or representative of himself in the form of a dog, ape, or cat. Occasionally it was some other type of animal, but usually small and black.

To nourish these "familiars" with the blood of a witch was forbidden by law. The law books of the day had specific penalties for this deed which was ranked as a felony. Thus it was claimed they were nourished in secret, and with their aid the witch might raise storms, blight crops, lame cattle, topple over houses and cause pains, convulsions and illness.

If a witch desired to hurt a person, she made a clay or wax image in his likeness, and whatever harm or indignity she put on the doll or puppet was suffered by the one bewitched. A knife or a needle thrust into the waxen figure was felt acutely by the living recipient of the witch's curse, no matter how far distant he might be at the time.

By placing the image in running water, hot sunshine, or near a fire, the living flesh would waste as the figure melted or dissolved. The person thus cursed would die. This belief is still current among those who practice Voodoo.

The witch also had the power of riding winds, usually with a broomstick for a steed. This she was able to do after she had smeared the broom or herself with magic ointment. The terrible meetings of the unhallowed, as they flocked to their unholy sabbaths in snaky bogs or on lonely mountain tops has been described minutely by those who claim to have seen the sight.

Sometimes they cackled and gibbered through the night before the houses of the clergy, and it was only at Christmas that their powers failed them. The meetings were devoted to strange and wild orgies which would drive any outsider mad.

Even outside of Salem the strange belief in witches began to spread.

There was Goody Morse, of Market and High Streets in Newburyport, whose baskets and pots danced through her house continually and who was seen "flying about as if she had been cut in twain, or as if the devil did hide the lower part of her."

Still another, Goodman Hartley, would fly his brother wizards to the terrible meetings in the mountain in the shape of a fireball. During these journeys he left his own eyes at home and wore those of some brute animal. It was because his dog ate his eyes when he had carelessly left them on a table that afterward he had to wear those of a cat.

Marblehead had the notorious Old Mammy Redd. Because she was a witch she could curdle milk as it came from the cow and afterward change it into blue wool. She had the evil eye, and if she willed it, her glance or touch could cause a blight, like smallpox.

She had only to wish that a bloody cleaver be found in a cradle, to cause the little occupant to die. The unpleasant celebrity found her death at last, at the hands of her fellow-citizens who had been harried by no end of queer happenings.

Ships appeared just before they were wrecked and vanished while people were looking at them. Men were seen walking on the water not long after they had been buried. The howling wind was heard to name the sailors doomed never to return. Footsteps and voices were heard in the streets before the great were about to die. One man was chased by a gibbering corpse in its coffin. Still another was pursued by the devil in a carriage drawn by four white horses.

A young woman who had just received a present of some fish from her sweetheart was amazed to see him melt away into thin air. She was heart-broken when she learned the next morning that he had died at sea.

After all these terrible deeds ascribed to the

old crone, it was high time to be rid of Mammy Redd.

In New Haven they also managed to find witches. A farmer there cut off the ear of a pig that was seen walking on its hind legs. Shortly after an eccentric old lady of the neighborhood appeared with one ear muffled in a bandage. This was enough to satisfy the community that she was the one who was bewitching the area.

They noticed that fruit fell from the trees which they believed to be shaken by invisible hands. Children complained of being stuck by pins. One man rolled across the floor as if pushed and had to be stopped from rolling into a fire.

In the morning the old woman was found dead on her floor, killed during the night. Yet killing only made the situation worse, for she moved to a deserted house near her own, and there kept a mad revel every night. Fiddles were heard, lights flashed, stones were thrown, and yells sent cold shivers up the backs of neighboring people. The populace resorted to tearing the house down and finally peace and quiet was brought back to New Haven.

Eventually people began to come to their senses and the mad and terrible hue and cry against anyone who seemed a bit different began to stop. But for many years afterwards there were bigots who tried to persecute these innocent people. However, so persistent are these evil ideas and ignorant superstitions that even today one hears an occasional accusation of witchcraft. Perhaps some day such bigotry and stupidity will be gone from the world forever.

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, U. S. Code, Section 233) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF CHILLING TALES, published Bi-Monthly at Holyoke, Mass., for October 1, 1952.

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(Signed) GEORGE UNGAR, Business Manager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 22nd day of September, 1952.
Alphonse J. Persico, Notary Public
(My commission expires March 30, 1954)

The Creeping Hand



EVIL AND MALIGNANT, WITHERED AND DEAD, THE **HAND** WAS YET ALIVE. IT BROUGHT GREER FALLON THE SUCCESS HE YEARNED FOR, BUT AT A PRICE THAT WAS SET BY THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS HIMSELF. A PRICE NO HUMAN SOUL COULD AFFORD TO PAY. . .

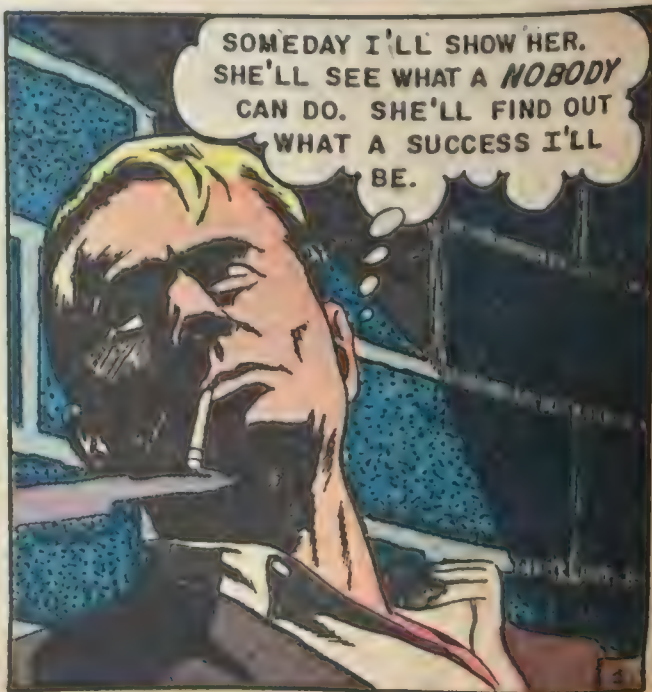
OUTSIDE A NEW YORK NIGHT CLUB AS GREER FALLON WATCHES THE GIRL HE LOVES WITH ANOTHER MAN . . .

I'M HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME, TED. IT'S SO MUCH FUN!

SHE THREW ME OVER BECAUSE I WASN'T A SUCCESSFUL PAINTER. SHE TOLD ME I WAS A **NOBODY**.



SOMEDAY I'LL SHOW HER. SHE'LL SEE WHAT A **NOBODY** CAN DO. SHE'LL FIND OUT WHAT A SUCCESS I'LL BE.

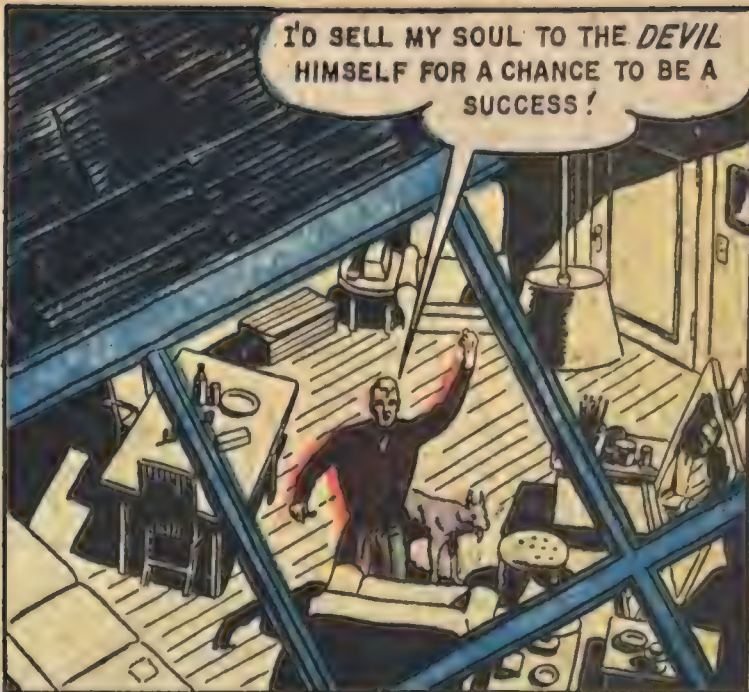


LATER, AT GREER'S BARREN STUDIO AS HE BROODS OVER HIS FAILURE...

WHY CAN'T I PAINT? WHY DON'T I HAVE GREAT TALENT?



I'D SELL MY SOUL TO THE *DEVIL* HIMSELF FOR A CHANCE TO BE A SUCCESS!



SUDDENLY THE ROOM ROCKS WITH AN ATOMIC FORCE AND A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT...

CRASH!



I HEARD YOU, GREER FALLON. DID YOU MEAN WHAT YOU SAID? WOULD YOU REALLY SELL YOUR SOUL FOR SUCCESS?

I... I... YES, I WOULD...!



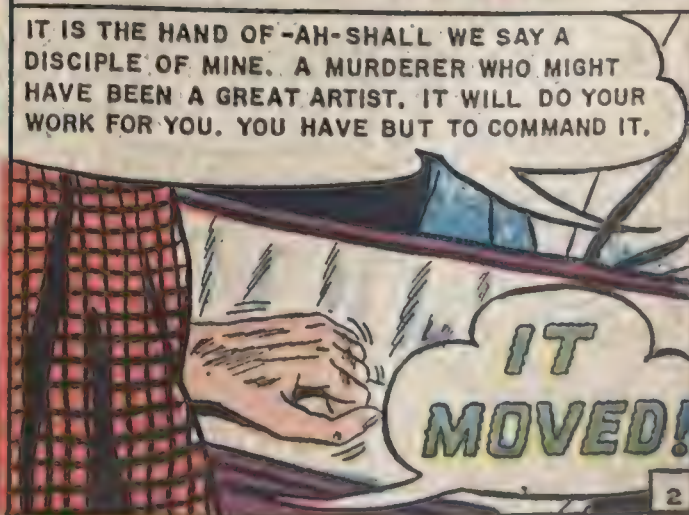
THEN WE HAVE MADE A BARGAIN! WITH *THIS* YOU WILL BE THE SUCCESS YOU WANTED TO BE.

WH-- WHAT IS IT?



IT IS THE HAND OF -AH-SHALL WE SAY A DISCIPLE OF MINE. A MURDERER WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN A GREAT ARTIST. IT WILL DO YOUR WORK FOR YOU. YOU HAVE BUT TO COMMAND IT.

IT MOVED!





YES, IT MOVED! HA HA HA HA!
USE IT WELL! HA HA HA HA!
GOODBY!



I MUST BE MAD... SUFFERING
FROM HALUCINATIONS! YET,
THERE IT IS!

THEN, AS IF GUIDED BY AN UNSEEN ARM, THE
HIDEOUS HAND MOVES TO GREER'S EASEL AND
BEGINS TO PAINT A PICTURE...

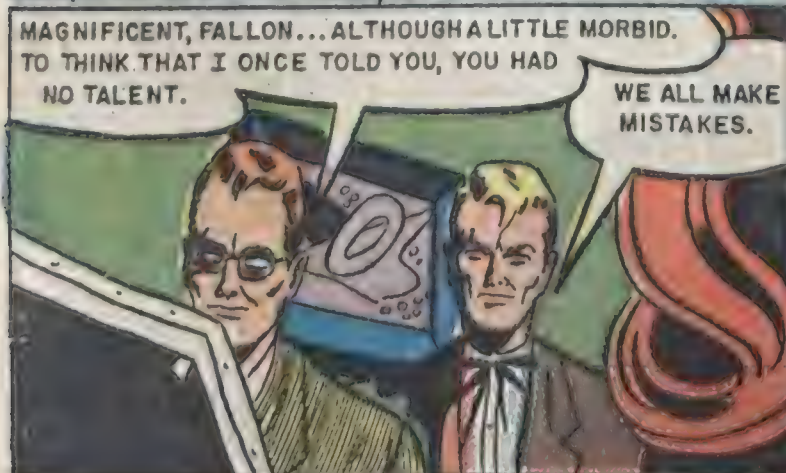


HE SAID I HAD BUT TO COMMAND IT.
VERY WELL, THEN... PAINT! UGH!
IT IS CREEPING OUT OF THE BOX!



NO! MY MIND MUST BE
CRACKING! I'M GOING
CRAZY!!

BUT IT IS *REAL*! IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS FALLON'S PAINT-
INGS, CREATED BY THE *HAND*, ARE IN WIDE DEMAND...



MAGNIFICENT, FALLON... ALTHOUGH A LITTLE MORBID.
TO THINK THAT I ONCE TOLD YOU, YOU HAD
NO TALENT.

WE ALL MAKE
MISTAKES.



WELL, HERE IS YOUR CHECK. AS SOON AS YOU
ARE READY I CAN COMMISSION YOU TO DO
ANOTHER FOR FIVE THOUSAND.

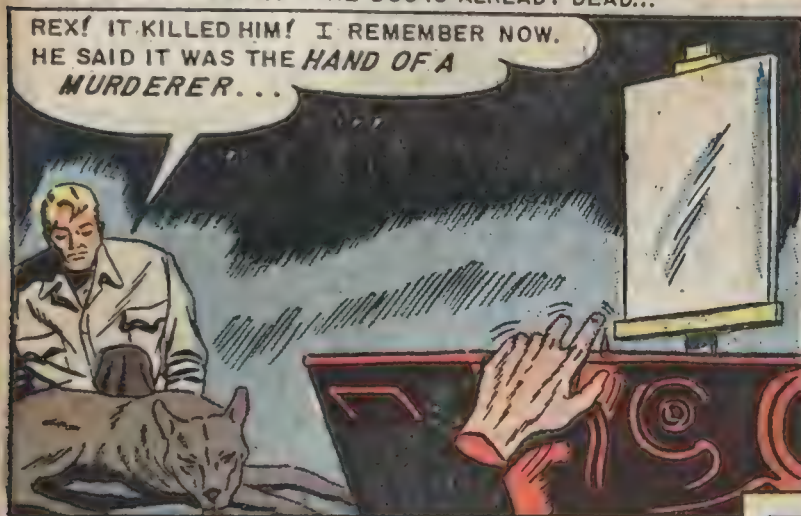
THANK YOU. IT'S
AS GOOD AS DONE.



BUT FALLON'S FEARS ARE GROUNDLESS. IN A SECOND THE EVIL HAND HAS THE DOG BY THE THROAT...

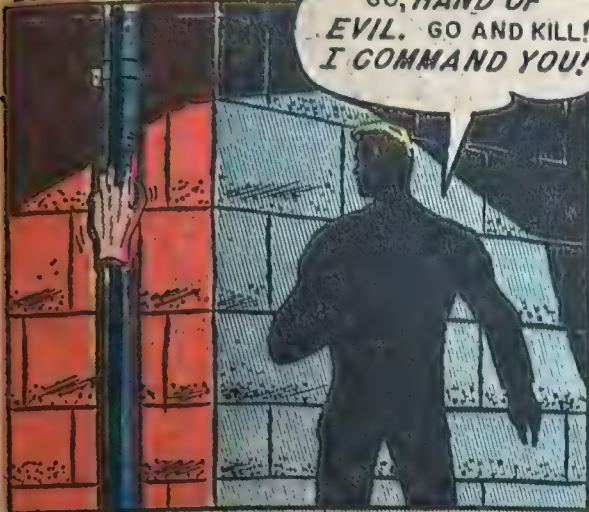


BUT IT IS TOO LATE! THE DOG IS ALREADY DEAD...





LATER THAT NIGHT GREER WATCHES THE MALIGNANT HAND AS IT CREEPS UP THE WALL OF MARY'S HOUSE STRAIGHT FOR HER BEDROOM WINDOW...



GO, HAND OF EVIL. GO AND KILL! I COMMAND YOU!

INTO THE WINDOW AND ONTO THE GIRL'S BED THE HAND CREEPS, ITS FINGERS WRITHING IN EVIL EXPECTATION...

THERE'S SOMEONE HERE! WHO IS IT? **HELP!**



THEN LIKE A FLASH, IT IS ON HER AND ITS CLAW-LIKE FINGERS TIGHTEN ABOUT HER THROAT...



COLDLY, HORRIBLY, THE AWFUL HAND DOES GREER'S BIDDING...

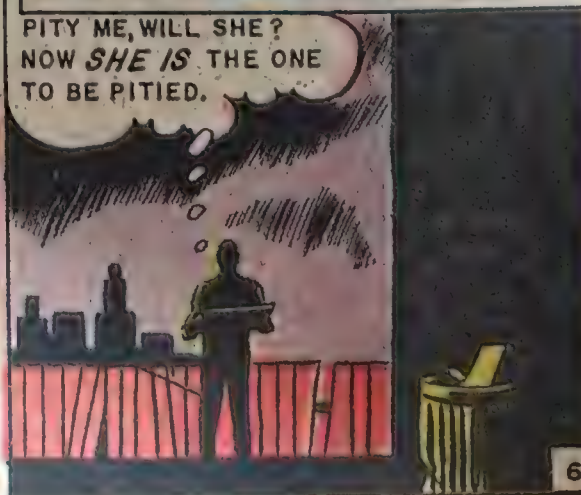


A MOMENT LATER IT CREEPS DOWN THE WALL AND BACK TO ITS VELVET-LINED RESTING PLACE...

IT IS DONE! COME, WE RETURN HOME.



PITY ME, WILL SHE? NOW *SHE IS* THE ONE TO BE PITIED.



BUT BACK AT HIS STUDIO GREER DOES BEGIN TO PITY MARY AND SLOWLY, AS HIS RAGE DIES, REMORSE SETS IN...

WHAT HAVE I DONE? I KILLED THE ONLY ONE I EVER LOVED.



WELL, YOU'LL NEVER DO EVIL AGAIN! I'LL DESTROY YOU FOR ALL TIME!



LIKE AN ARROW SPEEDING TO A TARGET, IT RACES FOR HIS THROAT AS THE STENCH OF BURNING FLESH FILLS THE ROOM...



IT'S YOUR FAULT! YOU PUT THOSE IDEAS IN MY HEAD! YOU... THE HAND OF A MURDERER!



LIKE A MAD THING, THE GRUESOME RELIC LEAPS INTO THE FLAMES AND THEN, ON FIRE, HEADS STRAIGHT FOR GREER...

IT GOT OUT!



IT'S FINGERS TIGHTEN LIKE BANDS OF STEEL AND SLOWLY LIFE EBBS FROM THE BODY OF GREER FALLON...

HA, HA, HA, HA! WELCOME, GREER FALLON, I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU... HA, HA, HA, HA!



THE END!

THE HOUSE OF GREED

IN THE CENTER OF THE RIVER RHINE NEAR BINGEN, STANDS A TOTTERING PILE OF STONE KNOWN AS THE "RAT TOWER." IT IS A LIVING MONUMENT TO THE GREED AND EVIL OF ONE MAN. A STORY OF HORROR UNSURPASSED...



THE YEAR 970 OUTSIDE THE HOUSE OF THE BISHOP HATTO NEAR BINGEN, AS ALL GERMANY SUFFERS FROM A TERRIBLE FAMINE...

FOOD, FOOD, WE
BEG OF YOU!

A LITTLE GRAIN THAT'S
ALL WE ASK.



MY CHILD IS DYING. JUST
A LITTLE GRAIN TO SAVE
HER LIFE.

YOU HAVE
PLENTY OF
GRAIN IN YOUR
BARN. HAVE
PITY, GIVE US A
LITTLE!



WHILE INSIDE THIS HOUSE OF GREED SITS THE BISHOP HATTO ENJOYING A HEARTY MEAL...

WHAT SHALL I DO, MY LORD, ABOUT THE RABBLE WHO CLAMOR AT THE GATE?

LET THEM HOWL. THEY WILL SOON TIRE AND GO AWAY!



BRING ME MORE WINE AND MEAT. I STILL HUNGER.

YES, SIRE!



BUT THE CROWD DOESN'T TIRE. DAY AFTER DAY THEY CLAMOR AND PLEAD FOR FOOD...

WE ARE DYING! HELP US!

I'LL SHOW HIM. HE CAN'T LET US STARVE LIKE RATS!



GIVE US GRAIN OR WE'LL TAKE IT!

AYE, WE CAN WAIT NO LONGER. DEATH LURKS AT OUR SHOULDER! GIVE US GRAIN!



WATCHING FROM HIS WINDOW THE CRUEL AND GLUTTONOUS HATTO CONCEIVES A HORRIBLE IDEA...

SO YOU WANT GRAIN, DO YOU? VERY WELL, I'LL SEE THAT YOU GET ALL YOU CAN HOLD... HANS!

SIRE!



TELL THEM TO COME TO THE WEST BARN. THEY MAY HAVE ALL THE GRAIN THEY CAN CARRY AWAY.

YES, MY LORD.



AT THE WEST BARN, THE EVIL HATTO TALKS TO THE STARVING PEOPLE...

ENTER, ALL OF YOU. WHEN YOU ARE ALL INSIDE, YOU MAY TAKE EQUAL SHARES.

GOD BLESS YOU, SIRE!



LOOK AT THEM! LIKE RATS! WELL, THEY'LL GET THE SAME TREATMENT AS RATS...



THEN, WHEN THE HUGE BARN IS JAMMED WITH THE STARVING HORDES...

THE BARN IS FULL. BAR THE DOORS! BRING TORCHES! QUICKLY!



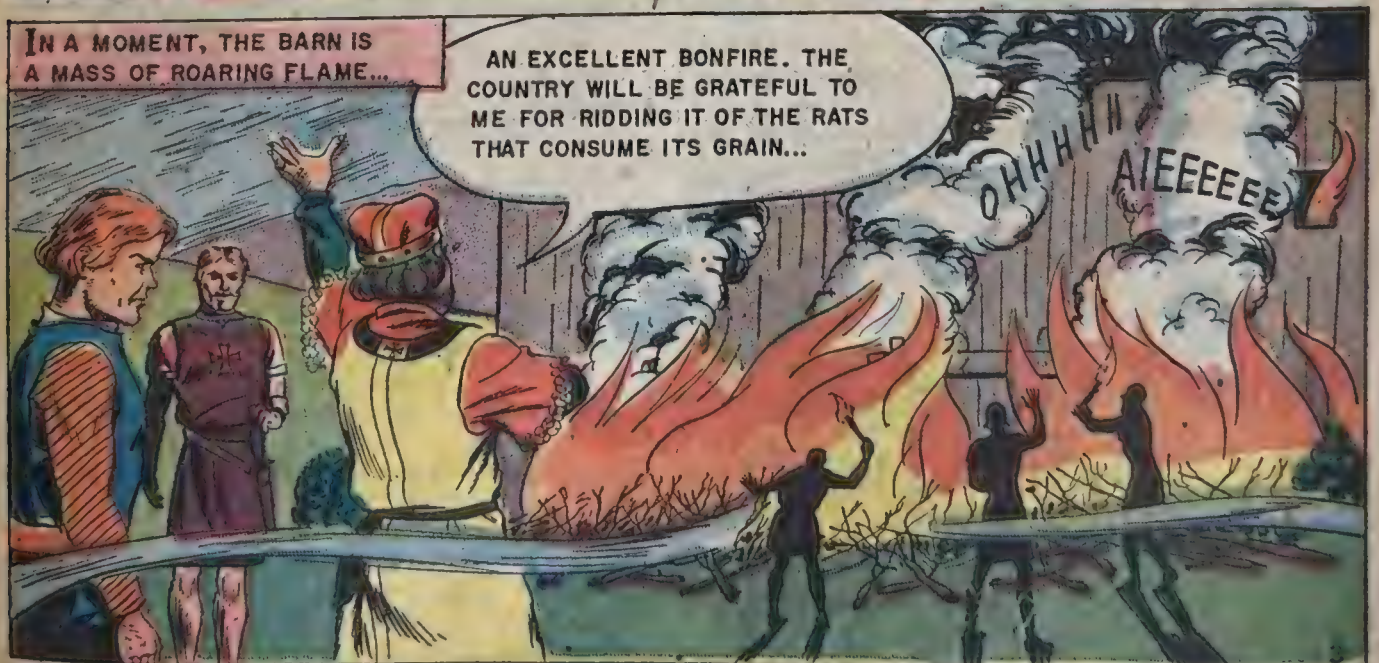
SET IT AFIRE, AND WE WILL RID OURSELVES OF THESE RATS THAT HAVE PLAGUED US SO!

YES, MY LORD!



IN A MOMENT, THE BARN IS A MASS OF ROARING FLAME...

AN EXCELLENT BONFIRE. THE COUNTRY WILL BE GRATEFUL TO ME FOR RIDDING IT OF THE RATS THAT CONSUME ITS GRAIN...





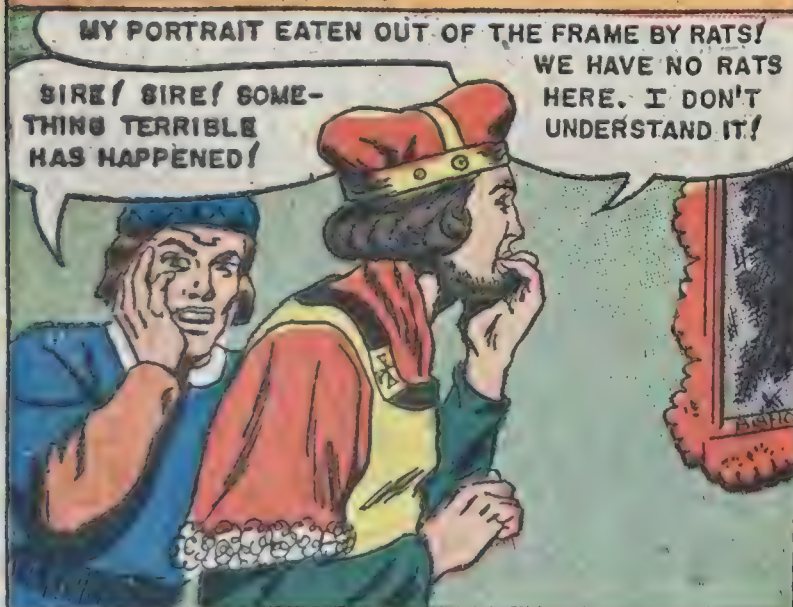
COME, I HAVE OTHER THINGS TO DO.



THAT NIGHT THE EVIL HATTO GOES TO BED... BUT THIS WAS TO BE HIS LAST NIGHT OF REST...

AN EXCELLENT DINNER TONIGHT. I MUST REMEMBER TO COMPLIMENT THE COOK.

ON AWAKENING, THE GLUTTONOUS BISHOP DESCENDS TO BREAKFAST TO FIND...



MY PORTRAIT EATEN OUT OF THE FRAME BY RATS! WE HAVE NO RATS HERE. I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT!

SIRE! SIRE! SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAS HAPPENED!



AN ARMY OF RATS HAS EATEN EVERY BIT OF GRAIN IN YOUR BARN.

MY LORD, YOU MUST FLEE!

WHAT!



RATS! MILLIONS OF THEM! THEY ARE COMING INTO THE HOUSE. LOOK OUT YON WINDOW!

WE FLEE! WHY?



THE EVIL HATTO SEES A SIGHT THAT FILLS HIM WITH DREAD AND LOATHING...

IT IS TRUE!

IT IS THE JUDGMENT OF GOD! YOU ARE BEING PUNISHED!



MAKING HIS ESCAPE, THE MURDEROUS HATTO ROWS TO HIS ISLAND TOWER AND CASTS THE BOAT ADRIFT...



JUST BEFORE DAWN, THE WICKED BISHOP IS AWAKENED BY A FEARFUL SHRIEK...



FEARFULLY, HE ATTEMPTS TO STRIKE A LIGHT, AS TWO EYES OF FLAME PEER AT HIM...



AT LAST HE SUCCEEDS IN STRIKING A LIGHT REVEALING THE CAT IN THE THROES OF TERROR...

IT WAS ONLY THE CAT, BUT WHY IS SHE SO FRIGHTENED?... WHAT IS THAT SCURRYING NOISE?



A MOMENT LATER THE ARMY OF RATS POUR THROUGH THE WINDOWS...

NO! NO! NO! KEEP AWAY!



AS THE FIRST GREY FINGERS OF DAWN LIGHT THE SKY, THE BISHOP GROWS MAD WITH FEAR...

THEY SWAM THE RIVER! THEY ARE CRAWLING UP THE SIDES OF THE TOWER, HELP! HELP!



THEN THEY ARE UPON HIM...

NO! AAAAAAGH!



A MOMENT LATER ALL THAT IS LEFT OF THE FAT BISHOP IS A SKELETON PICKED CLEAN. JUSTICE HAS HAD ITS WAY. THE HOUSE OF GREED IS NO MORE...



THE END...

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